

TO: Mayor Rogin and Members of the Board of Trustees
FROM: Victoria Simonsen, Town Administrator
Philip Strom, Director of Community Development
ITEM: Wildfire Mitigation Update and Discussion

ORDINANCE
 MOTION / RESOLUTION
 INFORMATION

I. REQUEST OR ISSUE:

Recent local fire activity is a stark reminder of the urgent need to develop a plan in preparation for a catastrophic fire that could strike at any time. The first step in wildfire prevention is to raise awareness of the responsibilities of living in a fire-prone environment. Individual and community action can ensure that homes and neighborhoods are better prepared for wildfire when it strikes.

II. RECOMMENDED ACTION / NEXT STEP:

The Town, along with the Planning and Community Development Commission (PCDC) Wildfire Mitigation Subcommittee, are working in coordination with the Lyons Fire Protection District (LFPD) to develop and implement a wildfire protection plan.

III. FISCAL IMPACTS:

None.

IV. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Background

In 2020 the prior Board of Trustees created the Wildfire Task Force, this Taskforce effort resulted in:

- Creation of the taskforce
- Identification of Town owned properties at higher risk for wildfire
- Fire mitigation and fuels reduction event
- Assistance in development of 2022 budget for fire mitigation of Martin Parcel (109 County Road 69)
- Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Code recommendations

This Taskforce was a volunteer led effort and after completing the above, started to dissolve in early 2022. The prior Board directed the PCDC to explore the adoption and provide a recommendation of a WUI Code. Early into this effort, the PCDC concluded wildfire mitigation requires a broad, coordinated approach and that the WUI Code is only

part of, and should be adopted in coordination with, other strategies. Additionally, a plan and strategy for wildfire mitigation would require a new taskforce to provide guidance and the taskforce should include Town Staff, LFPD, and other local agency stakeholders. The prior Board agreed with the PCDC recommendation and requested Town Staff return with a Resolution to assign a Wildfire Mitigation Taskforce.

Update

Since that request, the PCDC formed a Wildfire Mitigation Subcommittee, and along with Town Staff and Administrator Simonsen, met with LFPD on April 11, 2022. This was an introductory meeting and an opportunity to listen to LFPD's goals moving forward and several topics were discussed, below is a summary of the major topics to update the Board.

LFPD discussed the lack of staffing and funding as a significant barrier to wildfire mitigation. They have begun outreach to neighborhoods, such as the Longs Peak Homeowner's Association, as strategy to expand their outreach with minimal staff. The Town offered to assist LFPD, such as helping with the coordination of neighborhood education and mitigation events as well as aid in grant applications.

Additionally, LFPD provided an update on the Statewide WUI Code adoption (see attachment 1). The Colorado Fire Commission (CFC) formed a WUI Subcommittee that is responsible for adopting a minimum statewide code based on wildfire hazard in the next 24 months. Once adopted, the Town would be responsible for enforcement of the minimum code within their jurisdiction. The Town could also implement a stricter code than what the State adopts. Additionally, the Town could appeal to the WUI Code Board to modify the code to better meet the community needs. LFPD recommended to wait and leverage the State code in the adoption of a Town WUI Code.

Last, the LFPD provided the 2011 Lyons Fire Protection District Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), which while over 10 years old, they are still using because many of the recommendations have not been implemented and it can still serve as a guide for the community.

Next Steps

Wildfire Task Force Recommendation

The Town and PCDC Subcommittee will continue to coordinate with the LFPD and a follow up meeting will be scheduled in June. Currently the Town and Subcommittee plan to gather more information and a better understanding of stakeholders before providing a Task Force Recommendation to the Board.

Education

In coordination with LFPD, the Town will meet with neighborhoods to educate the community and inform them on resources available for mitigation events.

Events

The Town will be holding a local curbside limb pick-up event this May 16th and 17th. Lyons Prepared is organizing a limb drop-off event for Unincorporated Residents as well as other volunteer opportunities for mitigation around Town.

Grant Assistance

With the Town's extensive grant application and management experience, the Town has offered staff assistance to coordinate with the LFPD on grant applications for wildfire mitigation.

WUI Code

The PCDC Wildfire Mitigation Subcommittee will continue to research WUI Code and explore opportunities to implement wildfire mitigation steps into Town code or guidelines while the States continues to develop their WUI Code. Additionally, the PCDC Subcommittee will continue to follow the development of the State WUI Code in coordination with the LFPD to prepare for any code modifications that may be necessary once the State code is adopted.

V. LEGAL ISSUES:

None.

VI. CONFLICTS OR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:

None.

VII. SUMMARY AND ALTERNATIVES:

The Town and PCDC Subcommittee will continue to coordinate with the LFPD on education outreach, events, grant assistance, and the WUI Code. Understanding the LFPD goals and developing a strategy moving forward will lead to a recommendation to the Board for a Task Force.

VIII. ATTACHMENTS:

1. CDC – WUI Subcommittee Recommendation 22-01
2. 2011 Lyons Fire Protection District Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)